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1 – EPA extends climate rule comment period, The Hill, 9/16/2014

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/217872-administration-pushes-climate-rule-comment-period-back>

The Obama administration on Tuesday added more time to the clock for the public to comment on the president's signature climate rule on existing power plants.

2 – Delta Shipyard in Houma named to EPA Superfund cleanup list, New Orleans Times-Picayune, 9/16/14

http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2014/09/delta_shipyard_in_houma_named.html

Delta Shipyard in south Houma, an abandoned 165-acre cleaning repair facility for small cargo boats, fishing boats and oil barges, has been added to the Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund National Priority List, the agency announced Tuesday (Sept. 16).

3 - Oil firms lectured on caring for Eagle Ford, San Antonio Express-News, 9/16/2014

<http://www.mysanantonio.com/business/eagle-ford-energy/article/Oil-firms-lectured-on-caring-for-Eagle-Ford-5760534.php>

The Eagle Ford Shale zoomed from basically nothing — a rock that companies drilled through on the way somewhere else — in 2008 to around 1.5 million barrels of liquid production per day now.

4 – Moore, Oklahoma, celebrates new wastewater treatment plant, The Oklahoman, 9/16/2014

<http://newsok.com/moore-oklahoma-celebrates-new-wastewater-treatment-plant/article/5342718/?page=2>

For years, drivers on Interstate 35 through Moore ran the risk of encountering obnoxious odors. The city's old wastewater treatment plant, located just off the highway, was failing to keep up with Moore's growing population.

5 – Texas A&M receives funds to build artificial reef habitats, The Record (Orange Co., TX), 9/16/2014

<http://therecordlive.com/2014/09/16/texas-am-receives-funds-to-build-artificial-reef-habitats/>

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Gulf of Mexico Program recently announced that Texas A&M University will receive over \$198,000 in a cooperative agreement.

6 – Chemical reform bill faces uphill battle in Senate, Washington Post, 9/16/14

<http://wapo.st/1qYbWRj>

Over the summer, Sens. Tom Udall, D-N.M., and David Vitter of Louisiana, the top Republican on the Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee, provided a revised draft of their chemical regulation bill to committee chairwoman Barbara Boxer, who told The Associated Press this week that the draft still falls short.

7 – AGs from 7 states, D.C. back Obama admin on Clean Water Act proposal, Greenwire, 9/16/2014

<http://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2014/09/16/stories/1060005911>

Attorneys general from seven states and the District of Columbia expressed support today for a contentious Obama administration Clean Water Act proposal that has become a political punching bag.

8 – EPA weighing new regs for toxic discharges at refineries and wastewater facilities, E&E News, 9/16/14

<http://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2014/09/16/stories/1060005920>

U.S. EPA is taking a closer look at potentially toxic discharges from petroleum refineries and wastewater treatment facilities that handle water from oil and gas extraction as the agency weighs the possibility of new regulations.

9 – Solar panels may cut Lamar-Dixon Expo Center’s power costs by 10 percent, Baton Rouge Advocate, 9/16/2014

<http://theadvocate.com/news/10288256-123/solar-panels-may-cut-lamar-dixon>

Horizontal electrical wires and vertical metal support braces formed two rectangular grids on Monday on the south-facing roof of a livestock barn at Lamar-Dixon Expo Center in Ascension Parish.

10 – A Hobbyist Whose Workshop Sits Among the Cypress Trees, The New York Times, 9/16/2014

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/17/us/a-hobbyist-whose-workshop-sits-among-the-cypress-trees.html?ref=us>

Come the weekend, some people golf. Matt Conn restores his wetland. On any given Saturday, Mr. Conn, 38, might be taking a chain saw and poison to the invasive Chinese tallow trees that crowd his property and steal light from the thousands of native bald cypress, bitter pecan and green ash he has planted.

11 – Norco renewable diesel plant returning to operation, Baton Rouge Advocate, 9/16/2014

<http://theadvocate.com/news/10295720-123/story.html>

The Diamond Green Diesel facility in Norco is expected to return to production next week, according to joint-venture partner Darling Ingredients.

12 – Report argues that climate change-induced wildfires should factor into carbon's social cost, Climatewire, 9/16/2014

<http://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2014/09/16/stories/1060005871>

The rising price of wildfires due to climate change should be included in the U.S. government's future estimates of the social cost of carbon emissions. This is the argument in a report released today by New York University's Institute for Policy Integrity, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Environmental Defense Fund.

13 - Electric Vehicles Are Cleaner, but Still Not a Magic Bullet, The New York Times, 9/16/14

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/17/automobiles/electric-vehicles-are-cleaner-but-still-not-a-magic-bullet.html?_r=0

The Union of Concerned Scientists said on Tuesday that in 60 percent of the United States, electric vehicles are now responsible for fewer heat-trapping global warming emissions per mile than even the most efficient hybrids.



EPA extends climate rule comment period

By Laura Barron-Lopez - 09/16/14 01:52 PM EDT

The Obama administration on Tuesday added more time to the clock for the public to comment on the president's signature climate rule on existing power plants.

The Environmental Protection Agency's head of the Air and Radiation Office, Janet McCabe, said the agency would extend the comment period another 45 days.

The EPA started with a 120-day public comment period, which is twice the typical 60 days afforded federal regulations.

Now, stakeholders have until Dec. 1 to comment on the rule, which mandates the nation's existing power plants cut carbon dioxide pollution 30 percent by 2030 from 2005 levels.

"We hope this additional time will give those entities wishing to submit comments the time they need to engage with us, ask questions and ultimately provide input that will help ensure that, in the end, this plan is practical, flexible, and achievable," McCabe said.

When asked if the delay would impact the EPA's timeline for finalizing the rule by next year, McCabe said the agency will have "plenty of time" to finish the rule and is "still working towards a June deadline."

The decision comes after **more than half of the Senate urged** the EPA last week to extend the comment period for another 60 days.

The EPA said its move to push back the comment period was not simply in response to the calls from lawmakers but other stakeholders as well, who want more time to provide input on the controversial rule.

TAGS: Environmental Protection Agency, Janet McCabe, Climate change, carbon pollution

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Everything New Orleans

Delta Shipyard in Houma named to EPA Superfund cleanup list

Delta Shipyard Superfund site in Houma

Map of the Delta Shipyard in Houma, which was added to the Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund site list on Tuesday. Federal dollars will eventually be used to remove hazardous materials from old evaporation pits, marked in yellow, and more recent evaporation pits, marked in red. (*Environmental Protection Agency*)

Mark Schleifstein, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune By **Mark Schleifstein, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune**

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on September 16, 2014 at 7:30 PM, updated September 16, 2014 at 7:32 PM

Delta Shipyard in south Houma, an abandoned 165-acre cleaning repair facility for small cargo boats, fishing boats and oil barges, has been added to the **Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund** National Priority List, the agency announced Tuesday (Sept. 16).

"Finalizing the Delta Shipyard site on the NPL will allow EPA and our partners to begin restoring the land," said EPA Regional Administrator Ron Curry. "Addressing these types of complex cleanups is one of the most important parts of EPA's mission."

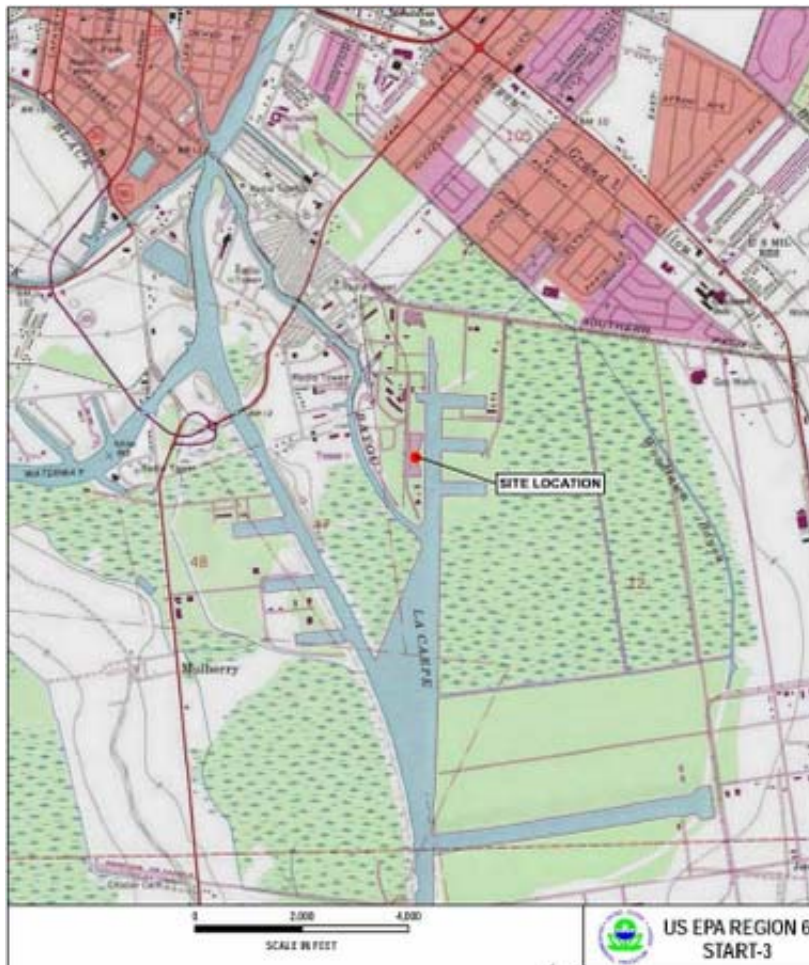
The site contains several unlined earthen pits that were used to evaporate oily waste from the cleaning process and that officials believe may also have been used to dispose of oilfield drilling wastes.

Wetlands near the site also are contaminated with toxic heavy metals, including arsenic and lead, and chemicals such as benzene. The evaporation pits also contain more than 30,000 cubic yards of hazardous materials, officials said.

Contamination from the site also has been found in groundwater, surface water and soils.

Studies of the site indicated that contamination was flowing into a ditch and then into a bayou just 2 1/2 miles downstream from where the city draws drinking water during periods when salt water prohibits use of water from Bayou Lafourche. Both bayous are tidal, meaning there's a risk that contaminants might move upstream.

Louisiana's **Department of Environmental Quality** requested EPA to include the site on the priority list when ownership of the land became unclear. The original shipyard went out of business in the early 1980s and a variety of businesses had used portions of the site since then. There already are more than 800 Superfund sites being cleaned or under the control of the federal government nationwide.



The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, which governs the Superfund program, gives EPA the authority to clean up the sites and to attempt to collect the costs for the cleanup from the parties responsible for the site.

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The new Delta Shipyard Superfund site is on the southern edge of Houma, in Terrebonne Parish.

Environmental Protection Agency

Oil firms lectured on caring for Eagle Ford

BY JENNIFER HILLER : SEPTEMBER 16, 2014

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SAN ANTONIO — The Eagle Ford Shale zoomed from basically nothing — a rock that companies drilled through on the way

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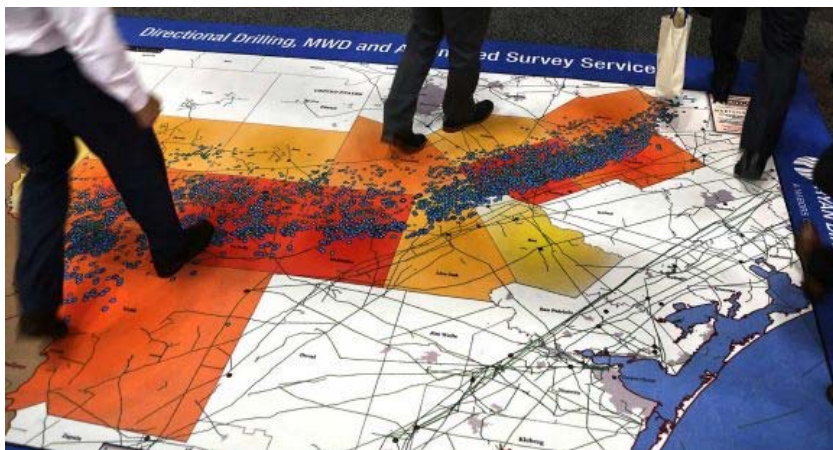
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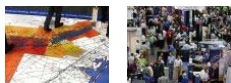
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Workers from the oil and gas industry walk across a map showing Eagle Ford well activity in South Texas.

1 of 2



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US consumer prices fall 0.2 percent in August, first drop in 16 months, as energy costs dip

somewhere else — in 2008 to around 1.5 million barrels of liquid production per day now.

But Marathon Oil Corp. President and CEO Lee Tillman said Tuesday that the industry now needs to address key “legitimate issues” including air quality, water management and roads — with a sense of urgency.

“We must be responsible corporate neighbors and never lose sight of the fact that we’re guests in these communities and will be judged by our individual and collective actions,” Tillman said. “We as an industry must earn our license to operate each and every

day.”

Tillman gave the opening keynote speech at Hart Energy's DUG Eagle Ford Conference at the Convention Center, where about 4,800 oil and gas professionals are meeting through today.

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A recent San Antonio Express-News investigation found statewide flaring and venting in Texas had surged by 400 percent to 33 billion cubic feet in 2012. Nearly two-thirds of the gas lost that year — 21 billion cubic feet — came from the Eagle Ford.

The rate of Eagle Ford flaring was 10 times higher than the combined rate of the state's other oil fields.

By 2012, pollution levels from flaring exceeded the total air emissions of all six oil refineries in Corpus Christi. And despite assurances by the Texas Railroad Commission that gas flares are safely regulated, the newspaper found seven Eagle Ford operations with some of the highest amounts of flaring had failed to obtain the necessary permits from the agency.

Tillman called for regulatory compliance and said Marathon has dramatically reduced the amount of time gas gets flared before going into pipelines to market.

“We now count that time in hours, and have averaged less than seven hours of flaring per well this year before we’re able to send the gas to sales,”

he said.

The Houston company also has dropped its water use by 45 percent for hydraulic fracturing, and relies on a water supply that's mostly brackish — even though those wells are deeper (and more expensive) for it to drill.

Tillman also encouraged voters to approve the November constitutional ballot constitutional amendment that would divert about \$1.2 billion a year in oil and gas taxes paid by drilling companies from the state's Rainy Day Fund and use it for transportation. Deteriorating road conditions have become a key quality of life issue in South Texas, where heavy trucks now dominate a road system built for farmers and ranchers.

Tillman and other speakers talked about the technical aspects of drilling and completing better wells in the field, but also hit on larger issues.

The Eagle Ford and the Permian Basin in West Texas have pushed up Texas oil production past 3 million daily barrels for the first time since the late 1970s, U.S. Energy Information Administration says.

With production surging, talk in the industry has turned to: What to do with all of the production?

Light sweet crude oil is flowing toward Gulf Coast refiners in such volume that a supply-demand problem is looming.

Crude oil exports have been banned since 1975, but the federal government opened an avenue for export in June when it ruled that condensate could be exported with minimum processing through a distillation tower.

Condensate is an ultralight oil that condenses from gas to liquid when it reaches the surface. It's clear and resembles lighter fluid more than black crude oil.

It's also prolific in the Eagle Ford — as much as 40 to 45 percent of the liquids production in the field is condensate, according to Hart Energy.

Pioneer Natural Resources Co. and the midstream company Enterprise Products Partners already have permission to export the condensate. Pioneer President and COO Timothy Dove said Tuesday that the companies in August and September shipped three cargo loads.

"They're finding homes in places like Singapore, Japan and also Rotterdam, so there's a very, very large petrochemical market out there that would love to diversify with U.S. supply," Dove said.

Dove also pushed Tuesday for lifting the export ban on crude oil, as did other speakers.

"We want to avoid the cliff or the wall or the day of reckoning that has to do with having to lay down rigs" because of the inability to take more light, sweet crude into the refining system, Dove said.

Tillman told the audience in his morning keynote, "We want our barrels to compete on the global market, and so should you."

Although there hasn't been much focus on the Eagle Ford's gas production, the field has a large dry gas "window" that could see increased drilling if natural gas prices rise or if the government permits the export of liquefied natural gas to markets in Asia and Europe.

In Texas, the Eagle Ford arcs from the border to East Texas. While wells bring up a mix of hydrocarbons, the top lip of the swoosh makes mostly crude oil, the middle makes mainly condensate and the bottom lip makes dry natural gas.

Eagle Ford operators also continue looking at Mexico, which is giving foreign companies a crack at contracts to drill for oil and gas for the first time in decades.

The Eagle Ford extends across the Rio Grande into the Burgos and Sabinas basins.

Trevor Sloan, managing director and energy research analyst with ITG Investment Research, said the early test wells in Mexico "don't look fantastic" but are "encouraging enough" for drillers to keep trying, especially if well costs can come down and operators improve well completions.

"You've got 17 million acres to poke around in in Mexico, so it's a big prize," Sloan said.

Several speakers said that Mexican shale is likely to develop more slowly than the Eagle Ford in Texas, especially with surface owners having no stake in the minerals.

It's also not yet clear what foreign companies can expect in Mexican shale in terms of security, contracts and regulation. But there's a sense that there is likely to be plenty of potential work for both drillers and companies that build infrastructure such as pipelines.

"Mexico has 6,000 miles of pipeline in the whole country, vs. the state of Texas, which has 300,000," said Josh Weber, senior vice president of commercial and business development with San Antonio-based Howard Midstream Energy Partners LLC. "There's going to be plenty of opportunities."

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Moore, Oklahoma, celebrates new wastewater treatment plant

A grand opening ceremony was held Tuesday for the \$52 million center

By Sarah Lobban, Staff Writer • *Modified: September 16, 2014 at 9:08 pm* • *Published: September 17, 2014*

MOORE — For years, drivers on Interstate 35 through Moore ran the risk of encountering obnoxious odors. The city's old wastewater treatment plant, located just off the highway, was failing to keep up with Moore's growing population.



Robert Pistole, project manager, demonstrates a control panel in the headworks building of the new wastewater treatment center in Moore. Photo By Steve Gooch, The Oklahoman **Steve Gooch —**

Tuesday, city leaders and Moore residents celebrated the grand opening of a \$52 million wastewater treatment center at 4000 S Interstate 35 Service Road. Mayor Glenn Lewis praised residents for voting for the sewage tax increase that funded the plant.

“Everybody was tired of the smell, and everybody helped to get it fixed,” he said.

The state-of-the-art facility has a processing capacity of 90 million gallons a day, the equivalent of more than 15 Olympic-size swimming pools. The old plant had only half that capacity.

City leaders also struggled to meet environmental regulations with the old plant, especially ammonia levels in the processed water.

The city initially hired Edmond-based Eagle Consultants in hopes they could fix the old facility to lessen the ammonia output. But principal engineer and President Satish Dasharathy told them that with their outdated equipment, that wasn't a possibility.

“You can't just band-aid something and expect it to work,” Dasharathy said. “The treatment technology they had was just not enough.”

Instead, Dasharathy and his team worked to design an entirely new facility. With the new technology, the plant now releases less than the amount of ammonia allowed by law.

\$52M facility built for longevity

City of Moore project manager Robert Pistole has worked at the plant since 1997. He's thrilled with the changes the facility has made. When he started, the facility consisted of four buildings. The administrative office shared space with labs and what Pistole called, "the biosolids room."

"Quality of life for our employees was a big issue to us, too," he said. "There were some rooms you could barely stand to be in. Back in the day, they saved money by condensing things, but we realized that that's not efficient in the long run. We built this plant for longevity."

Officials from environmental agencies attended the opening ceremony to express appreciation for Moore's commitment to clean water and air.

"This was done right," said Jimmie Givens, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality deputy executive director. "It was done in a thoughtful way, and coordinated and cooperated with DEQ from the start. The resources that this helps protect benefit all of us."

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Texas A&M receives funds to build artificial reef habitats

September 16, 2014 [Regional & State](#) [No comments](#)



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Gulf of Mexico Program recently announced that Texas A&M University will receive over \$198,000 in a cooperative agreement for the project "Use of Seawater Electrolysis to Build Artificial Reef Habitat: Comparison with Traditional Shell Reefs." Dr. Paul Zimba, Director, Center for Coastal Studies of Texas A&M University, will lead the project.

"The Gulf of Mexico Program is committed to supporting our partners in addressing mutual goals of improving, protecting and restoring the health and productivity of the Gulf of Mexico," Ben Scaggs, Director of the U.S. EPA Gulf of Mexico Program said. "We look forward to the sustainable environmental results that will be accomplished through this cooperative agreement with Texas A&M University."

"The ability to enhance existing restoration efforts by using artificial reef construction methods will provide another tool to increase hard-bottom habitat," said Dr. Zimba. "Texas estuaries had millions of oyster shells removed in the 1900s; this removal has altered the functionality of these systems. The development of new hard-bottom habitat will provide habitat suitable for oyster growth and expansion."

The result from this project will be enhanced (restored) ability of the ecosystem to maintain watershed level quality of coastal and ocean waters by reducing net nutrient export to the sea. The project approach will be to build an

oyster test bed from artificial and rubble reef in Corpus Christi Bay. The project will use electrolysis to grow new sea-bed habitat to encourage development of aquatic life that will filter overlying water (Heck and Valentine 2007).

This cooperative agreement will further the strategic goals and objectives of EPA's Gulf of Mexico Program and lead to a healthy and prosperous ecosystem for generations to come.

Information on the Gulf of Mexico Program: <http://www.epa.gov/gmpo>.

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Business

Chemical reform bill faces uphill battle in Senate



FILE - In this June 12, 2013 file photo, Senate Superfund, Toxics and Environmental Health subcommittee Chairman Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M. is seen on Capitol Hill in Washington. The powerful chemical industry is putting its lobbying muscle behind legislation that would establish standards for chemicals used in products from household goods to cellphones and plastic water bottles _ but also make it tougher for states to regulate them. (Charles Dharapak, File/Associated Press)

By Associated Press September 13

WASHINGTON — Efforts to come up with a new chemical regulation bill face an uphill battle in the Senate.

Over the summer, Sens. Tom Udall, D-N.M., and

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David Vitter of Louisiana, the top Republican on the Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee, provided a revised draft of their chemical regulation bill to committee chairwoman Barbara Boxer, who told The Associated Press this week that the draft still falls short.

The original bill had been panned by some environmental groups, such as Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families, who assailed it as “phony reform,” although the Environmental Defense Fund supported its introduction as a chance for an eventual breakthrough.

At stake is a rewrite of the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act, known as TSCA, which is widely seen as an ineffective law to protect Americans from harmful chemicals.

While the new Senate draft hasn’t been released publicly, Udall told the AP that it makes “big progress” in the safety standard; protections for vulnerable populations, such as pregnant women, infants, children and workers; and strong deadlines for the EPA to work through chemicals.

One area that remains outstanding, Udall said, is how much federal law should take precedence

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over state regulations, which negotiators will turn to next. States such as California, which have come up with their own regulations in the absence of federal action, have warned that the language in the bill could jeopardize dozens of California laws and regulations.

Boxer, a Democrat from California, said that the latest draft is still too sweeping in its nullification of state regulations. Udall agreed that the pre-emption language in the original bill is much too broad and needs to be narrowed.

The attempt to come up with new chemical regulation legislation has shifted from a Democratic bill, the Safe Chemicals Act in the previous session of Congress, to the industry-backed bipartisan Chemical Safety Improvement Act. The American Chemistry Council, a trade group which represents such chemical powerhouses as Dow, DuPont, BASF Corp. and 3M, says that reforming TSCA is its top legislative priority. The ACC spent nearly \$6 million in lobbying expenses in the first half of the year.

Udall said that while he supported the Safe Chemicals Act, “without any bipartisan support and (with) wholesale industry opposition it simply couldn’t move forward. A new approach

was needed that could get the support needed to actually get it to the president's desk."

"The new draft is a giant leap forward from the last one," Udall added. "And most important is that it is a huge improvement compared to the law as it stands now, and as it has stood since 1976."

But Boxer, in her first public comments on the draft, said the draft doesn't make the changes needed to improve current law.

"The proposed safety standard does not clearly reject the ineffective standard contained in the original TSCA law that has resulted in very limited protection," she said. Boxer said timelines in the draft "remain extremely long — it is expected to take at least seven years before even a tiny fraction of the chemicals of concern are reviewed. This could leave nearly a thousand chemicals of greatest concern unaddressed."

Regulation of chemicals took on new urgency after a crippling spill in West Virginia last January contaminated drinking water for 300,000 residents. The chemical in the January spill, crude MCHM, is one of thousands not regulated under current law.

Boxer said she'll be proposing a provision that will specifically address toxic chemicals that could threaten drinking water supplies.

The director of Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families, Andy Igrejas, said that there's been progress made to improve the bill over the past few months.

"We have not seen a version that resolves all the issues leading to a clear improvement for public health and safety," he said, but added he was hopeful that negotiations among key senators could lead to such a bill.

Richard Denison, lead senior scientist at the Environmental Defense Fund, said that there are incentives for both sides to have a stronger system.

"We're still optimistic that even if doesn't happen in this Congress, that all of that work that's been done provides a path forward to actually getting a bill passed," he said.

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7. WATER POLICY:

AGs from 7 states, D.C. back Obama admin on Clean Water Act proposal

Annie Snider, E&E reporter

Published: Tuesday, September 16, 2014

Attorneys general from seven states and the District of Columbia expressed support today for a contentious Obama administration Clean Water Act proposal that has become a political punching bag.

In [comments](#) filed on the regulatory proposal from U.S. EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers, the attorneys general said the proposal is grounded in solid science, sets a strong floor for protecting rivers and streams, and provides much-needed legal clarity.

"Every New Yorker has an equal right to clean water, which is fundamental to the health, environment, and economy of our states," New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman (D) said in a statement. "The degradation of waters in upstream states can increase flooding, add pollution, damage hunting and fishing habitat, and foul the drinking water supplies of their downstream neighbors. We applaud EPA and the Corps for recognizing that the interconnectedness of our waters requires their comprehensive coverage under the Clean Water Act."

Other attorneys general signing on represent Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Rhode Island, Washington and the District of Columbia.

At issue is the administration's proposal that would increase the number of streams and creeks that receive automatic protection under the Clean Water Act following two muddled Supreme Court decisions.

Support from the attorneys general comes as the regulatory proposal faces fierce fire from opponents. Last week, the House voted 262-152 with the support of 35 Democrats for a measure to block the proposal ([E&E Daily](#), Sept. 10). And on Friday, state agriculture commissioners voted unanimously to call for the Obama administration to withdraw the proposal ([Greenwire](#), Sept. 15).

The AGs' support targets one of opponents' arguments against the rule -- that it intrudes on states' rights to regulate their waters and that no state was on record supporting it.

Advocates for the regulatory proposal today welcomed the AGs' comments.

"I commend the Attorneys General for their leadership on this critical action to restore protections for vulnerable waters across the nation," Natural Resources Defense Council President Frances Beinecke said in a statement. "This rule strikes the right balance between state autonomy and the national imperative to control dangerous water pollution."

Other attorneys general have come out in opposition to the rule. Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott (R) filed comments last month saying the proposal "unlawfully seeks to convey a potentially boundless amount of water and landscape jurisdiction to the federal government."

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STAY AHEAD OF THE HEADLINES

7. WATER POLLUTION:

EPA weighing new regs for toxic discharges at refineries and wastewater facilities

Annie Snider, E&E reporter

Published: Tuesday, September 16, 2014

U.S. EPA is taking a closer look at potentially toxic discharges from petroleum refineries and wastewater treatment facilities that handle water from oil and gas extraction as the agency weighs the possibility of new regulations.

EPA published its biennial [preliminary plan](#) for studying and potentially regulating industrial discharges in today's *Federal Register*.

The agency said it is initiating a new study on centralized waste treatment facilities that handle wastewater from oil and gas extraction.

A hydraulically fractured well can produce more than a million gallons of wastewater, often laced with salts, carcinogens and radioactive elements. While some companies initially sent that wastewater to municipal treatment plants that weren't designed to treat it, key states now require it to be sent to specialized treatment facilities. But EPA said in the report that many facilities do not treat for key pollutants.

The agency said in a [fact sheet](#) that it wants to determine whether these centralized facilities "provide adequate treatment for such wastewaters."

EPA is also looking for data and information as it starts a detailed study of the petroleum refining industry because of potential discharges of metals. The agency said new regulations coming online, as well as changes in feedstock, "may result in an increased discharge of metals from petroleum refineries, potentially at concentrations above treatable levels."

EPA also released its final 2012 plan today, announcing that it is formally ending a rulemaking for discharges from the coalbed methane extraction industry. The agency also said it has resolved wastewater discharge issues related to the meat and poultry products industry and the pulp, paper and paperboard industry.

The agency noted that it is continuing to work on a regulation to limit toxic discharges from power plants -- a rule that was originally supposed to be finalized in May, but for which EPA won a lengthy extension from the environmental groups it settled with ([Greenwire](#), April 16).

EPA's 2014 preliminary plan for industry discharge limits is open for public comment for 60 days.

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Solar panels may cut Lamar-Dixon Expo Center's power costs by 10 percent



Advocate staff photo by BILL FEIG -- Workers with Sunora Energy Solutions prepare Monday the grid of wires and support braces to hold solar panels on the roof of Barn 4 at Lamar-Dixon Expo Center near Gonzales. Ascension Parish government, which owns the expo center, is having six solar arrays like this one installed on barn roofs under a \$1.25 million mitigation project being paid for by utility NRG Energy Inc. The parish hopes the panels, which create enough juice to power 39 homes for a year, will save 10 percent of the expo center's annual electrical costs.

Expo center expects to cut power costs by 10%

by David J. Mitchell

dmitchell@theadvocate.com

GONZALES — Horizontal electrical wires and vertical metal support braces formed two rectangular grids on Monday on the south-facing roof of a livestock barn at Lamar-Dixon Expo Center in Ascension Parish.

The wires and braces were waiting for what sat in the big cardboard box along the edge of the barn's roof: new Chinese-made solar panels.

Workers with Sunora Energy Solutions of Phoenix were putting the final touches on the rooftop grids so the [solar panels](#) could soon be hooked up, parish and Sunora officials said.

Once assembled, the panels will form two 37,750-square-foot solar arrays on top of

Lamar-Dixon's Barn 4 and are the last of six solar arrays that Sunora workers have installed on the roofs of the Expo Center's barns.

Ken Dawson, parish chief administrative officer, said that based on early estimates, the new panels are expected to cut the Expo Center's electrical bills by 10 percent a year. He said bills run about \$450,000 to \$500,000 per year.

The solar arrays also are expected to offset air pollution that would otherwise be released annually during electrical generation, including 400,000 pounds of carbon dioxide, more than 600 pounds of sulfur emissions and more than 400 pounds of nitrogen oxides emissions.

NRG Energy, a Princeton, New Jersey-based utility, is paying \$1.25 million to install the arrays for Ascension Parish.

The Ascension project also involves the installation of solar LED lighting for a trail around an Expo Center lake.

The projects are part of \$10.5 million in [mitigation](#) that was required under a March 2013 federal consent decree settling [Clean Air](#) Act violations alleged over emissions from the coal-fired Big Cajun II power plant near New Roads. NRG, which also had to pay fines and do upgrades to Big Cajun II, owns the plant through subsidiary Louisiana Generating LLC.

Tim Turner, superintendent of Sunora, also an NRG subsidiary, said work on the solar arrays, which have already been installed on barns 5 and 6, started Sept. 4 and should be finished this week.

"It's going according to plan," Turner said during a visit to the barns Monday.

Once the last of the 1,056 solar panels are installed in the six arrays, workers will install wiring and other infrastructure so the arrays can start producing electricity, Turner said.

Michael Terry III, parish project engineer, said he expected the 300-kilowatt group of solar arrays to be producing energy by the end of October.

Terry added that based on past weather patterns in southeast Louisiana, an estimated five to six hours of sunlight per day and other factors, the six arrays have been initially estimated to produce as much as 390 megawatt-hours per year — which is enough electricity to meet the electrical needs of 39 average U.S. homes for one year.

"Once we have a year under our belt, we'll be able to collect more data and have a lot more concrete numbers," Terry said.

While owned by parish government, the 247-acre multi-use Expo Center near I-10 and Gonzales is treated like a separate parish enterprise under Ascension's budget. Parish President Tommy Martinez has strived for the center's \$2.2 million annual budget not to draw on the parish's general fund tax revenues but be paid for through event proceeds, onetime state and federal grants, annual state sales tax rebates, private sponsorships and center surpluses built up a few years ago.

The parish and Entergy Corp., which supplies power to the Expo Center and would see the center's power use reduced due to the NRG-funded solar panels, also are negotiating an agreement related to the solar project and power use at the center.

Martinez has for several years sought to consolidate the number of electrical meters at the Expo Center, a change he contends also will help the center save money on its electrical bills.

Dawson and Michael Burns, spokesman for Entergy, declined Tuesday to detail the terms of the agreement before it is finalized. Burns said, however, an agreement in principle has been reached and the final agreement will be made public.

Jennifer Vosburg, NRG senior vice president for the Gulf Coast region, said a third party connected NRG and Ascension Parish a few years ago as the parish began exploring solar power to save costs at the Expo Center.

Though the [vast majority](#) of NRG's electrical generation remains in coal, natural gas, oil and nuclear, NRG bills itself as one of the largest solar power developers in the nation and is a partner in the nation's largest solar-panel power [plant](#), which was recently built in the Arizona desert.

"It was a natural fit, and it turned out to be a great partnership," Vosburg said of the solar project with Ascension Parish.

Parish officials had initially thought the panels might be installed by the first quarter of 2014, but parish and NRG officials pointed to the need to get federal approval of the mitigation project and to ensure the rooftop solar arrays and their electrical connections were designed properly.

Terry noted the parish leadership knew the arrays, which will have a 25-year warranty, would be installed only once.

"We knew when we started this it was a one-time installation, and we really wanted to make sure we were getting the most bang for our buck," Terry said.

Follow David J. Mitchell on Twitter at [@NewsieDave](#).

U.S.

A Hobbyist Whose Workshop Sits Among the Cypress Trees

By JOHN SCHWARTZ SEPT. 16, 2014

IBERIA PARISH, La. — Come the weekend, some people golf.

Matt Conn restores his wetland.

On any given Saturday, Mr. Conn, 38, might be taking a chain saw and poison to the invasive Chinese tallow trees that crowd his property and steal light from the thousands of native bald cypress, bitter pecan and green ash he has planted. Or he could be digging ponds or mowing down brush with “the beast,” the 62-year-old Ford tractor that he bought used for \$1,800. “This thing is pretty much unstoppable,” he said with pride, and might as well have been talking about himself.

When thinking of people trying to repair their corner of the planet, those who come to mind tend to be wealthy, like Ted Turner and his prairie bison conservation efforts. But Mr. Conn’s work here in south-central Louisiana is do-it-yourself ecology: part tree-hugging, part tree-slashing, with buckets of sweat thrown in. The hours he has devoted and the thousands of dollars he has spent place his work somewhere between hobby and obsession. And, since Mr. Conn works as an environmental consultant, it is something of a busman’s holiday.

“It’s my therapy,” he said. “I’m one of those ‘society does not make any sense to me’ kind of guys. Nature does.”

Nature is not, however, gentle. On a recent visit, the temperature was 90ish, and the humidity made the air feel dense. Walking through the

property, thorns from blackberries and wild roses caught at clothing, and the tough strands of golden silk orb-weavers' webs twanged against the faces of anyone blundering through them. Mud sucked noisily at boots stepping on paths that could drop away to potholes deep enough to drench a hiker to the knee. The mosquitoes were tough enough to bite through clothing, while the deer flies left blood beads on exposed skin.

There is great beauty here, too: late-summer pink hibiscus and orange-flowered trumpet vine, and just above the mucky soil, grasses with tiny star-shaped flowers of white-top sedge. Cicadas burred and whined; a wren fussed.

Mr. Conn came to own this land unexpectedly. The original owner had started draining and clearing it to plant sugar cane, but since the land had been classified as protected wetlands, the move attracted the attention of the Environmental Protection Agency and other federal and state regulators. Mr. Conn was brought in as a consultant to develop a restoration plan. The owner, unwilling to face the regulatory headache, told Mr. Conn he wanted to sell "for a song."

"I tossed and turned all night," Mr. Conn recalled. He bought the about 65 acres in January 2010 for not much more than he would pay for his tractor, knowing that the restoration project would become his. Soon after the sale was completed, he shipped out for the second of his two deployments to Iraq, staying nearly a year to set up and maintain communications equipment for military and civilian infrastructure.

After returning, he got to work: He cut a notch in a levee that separated the property from a nearby canal, flooding the lowland. Tide and rains now bring in water that covers much of the property with a few inches to a foot or more.

When not planting saplings, he has leveled upland fields and replanted them with native prairie grasses, which he will burn this winter, rejuvenating them as nature has for millennia. He planted the bottom of his ponds with widgeon grass, providing a feast for ducks and for the blue crabs that washed in with the tides and stuck around to grow into fine

meals for Mr. Conn and his family.

Looking out over a shadier spot where the water rises halfway up his rubber boots, he said: “This is one of my favorite places. There’s always frogs; there’s always snakes. That means there’s something happening right.”

He tramps across his land with two devices strapped across his shoulders: a chain saw, yes, but also a camera to capture images of the returning wildlife. He is up to 119 species of birds — fewer than the 200 he might see if the old hardwood and cypress swamp had been retained, but more than on a sugar farm.

He keeps motion cameras with night vision on the property to capture images of the wildlife, including deer, bobcats, wild hogs and black bear, armadillo and rabbits.

He might be proudest of the cypress trees. They once towered abundantly here, vast old-growth forests with trees that can grow for more than 1,500 years, surrounded by roots that thrust up knobby “knees” emerging from the swamp. But the durable wood was prized for building, and the forests were logged intensively from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th. The old stands disappeared. Today, there is a business in retrieving “sinker” logs from the swamps — felled trees lost during the heyday, which can fetch good prices today for their beautiful, hardy planks. But the days of the giant cypress are gone, and even many of the 100-year-old cypress that have grown since the logging spree have been harvested for fragrant mulch.

He is trying to bring back this historic giant, which Louisiana proclaimed its state tree in 1963. He points them out, delicate-looking fernlike saplings that even after several years are no taller than he is and have to fight their way above the top of the brush to find the light. He strokes their feathery needles as he might the hair of a child. The trees will take decades to mature. “I won’t see this as a big, huge cypress forest in my time,” he said. “Maybe my grandkids.”

Not everyone gets the satisfaction that he does from this wet,

odoriferous place. His wife, Lauren Conn, who works in accounting, does not share his love of the raw outdoors. “If there’s one mosquito, it’s on me,” she said, and “I know nothing about birds.”

Worse, she said, while he was saving the planet, she was tending the children at home after his long deployment. But after reading the blog he keeps, she came around. “After reading it all, in his words, and all he did,” she said, “I was very proud of him.”

His toddler daughter loves walking along the paths throwing out seeds and loves riding in the tractor in her father’s lap. His oldest child, an 8-year-old boy, prefers to play Minecraft. “The boy, I have to coax a little,” Mr. Conn said. “He’s more inside.”

Does one man’s effort mean much in an environmentally degraded world? Nonprofit groups and initiatives like the federal Wetlands Reserve Program have helped restore millions of acres over the years, but officials who oversee such work say that individuals like Mr. Conn have a role to play. Randy Epperson, a resource conservationist and the acting head of wetlands easements for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, said “a little chunk is helpful; all the little chunks add up.”

Two months ago, Mr. Conn received word from the E.P.A. and the Army Corps of Engineers that the violations had been resolved; when the state agencies complete their inspection, he said, the project will have officially succeeded. He has no plans to develop the land, though he said he might explore government programs that would pay him to preserve it. “This is my wild place,” he said.

But, of course, he is far from done. In a few weeks, a helicopter will swing by, courtesy of a federal conservation program, to spray an herbicide that targets tallow trees. The program will also pay for the 6,000 trees he has ordered to plant this winter. He has been placing tallow trunks in the pond to provide perches for blue kingfishers and other birds, but he has noticed that they rot too quickly. He is planning to raise a mound of soil in the pond and plant a cypress or two.

“I have more plans than I have time for,” he said, sounding like a very

happy man.

A version of this article appears in print on September 17, 2014, on page A12 of the New York edition with the headline: A Hobbyist Whose Workshop Sits Among the Cypress Trees.

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Norco renewable diesel plant returning to operation

ADVOCATE BUSINESS STAFF REPORT

The Diamond Green Diesel facility in Norco is expected to return to production next week, according to joint-venture partner Darling Ingredients.

The facility has been shut down since an explosion and fire on Aug. 3. Darling said the start-up process began on Sept. 15. No one was injured in the blast.

Diamond Green, a joint-venture between Darling and Valero Energy Corp., makes diesel from used cooking oil and other feedstocks.

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THE POLITICS AND BUSINESS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

3. POLICY:

Report argues that climate change-induced wildfires should factor into carbon's social cost

Elizabeth Harball, E&E reporter

Published: Tuesday, September 16, 2014

The rising price of wildfires due to climate change should be included in the U.S. government's future estimates of the social cost of carbon emissions. This is the argument in a [report](#) released today by New York University's Institute for Policy Integrity, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Environmental Defense Fund.

The U.S. Social Cost of Carbon -- an estimate of the economic damage caused by an additional metric ton of CO₂ emissions -- has proven a hot topic on Capitol Hill, with environmental groups arguing the government's established value of \$37 is too low and conservative lawmakers protesting that the figure is too high.

Less controversial is the prediction that as climate change progresses, wildfires will become a bigger burden on the U.S. budget, especially in the West, where scientists have projected blazes will increase by 100 percent by 2050.

Based on the current body of wildfire research, the report concludes that total cost of wildfires spurred by climate change could add up to about \$22.5 billion annually by 2050 -- 0.13 percent of the estimated U.S. gross domestic product at that time. The report stresses this is only a rough estimate due to a number of economic uncertainties surrounding wildfires, but it argues that this ballpark figure should be enough to warrant a more in-depth analysis.

"We agree a lot of additional research needs to go in to this, but we need to start acting now to improve estimates because the costs are not zero, which is what we're currently assuming," said report author Peter Howard, an economic fellow at the Institute for Policy Integrity.

A number that is far removed from zero

The Institute for Policy Integrity has been generally supportive of EPA's recent moves to regulate greenhouse gas emissions, although it released a report this spring contending that the federal government's current social cost of carbon is likely too low ([Greenwire](#), March 13).

While the group's new report allows that wildfire is a natural phenomenon in many forest ecosystems, it details a number of potential damages that could become more costly as blazes become larger and more intense. Those damages include increasing fire suppression costs, loss of homes and infrastructure, reduced ecosystem services like watershed protection and public health impacts from smoke pollution.

"The omission of wildfire costs resulting from climate change may lead to a significant underestimation of the [social cost of carbon]," the report states, calling this "particularly problematic" because of the Obama administration's recent attention to the link between wildfires and global warming.

The federal government today spends about \$1.5 billion to combat wildfires each year, spurring the Obama administration to push for an overhaul of how suppression is funded. About 40 percent of the Forest Service's budget currently goes toward fighting fires, compared with 15 percent in the 1990s, the Department of Interior has said.

Nationwide, this year's wildfire season costs have so far come in below-average. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell said last week that other than in California, federal wildfire budgets are "in very good shape" ([Greenwire](#), Sept. 10).

But this trend is unlikely to continue if the Institute for Policy Integrity's estimation of future wildfire costs proves accurate. In addition to the \$22.5 billion price tag by 2050, the group roughly calculates that the global annual cost of climate change-induced wildfires could cost between \$50 billion and \$300 billion by midcentury.

"We need to do a better job of accounting for those costs in policy," Howard said.

Firefighting costs are just the beginning

The significant increase in costs due to climate-induced blazes "should be interpreted cautiously" the report warns, largely because there is still much to be learned about the full range of wildfire's economic consequences.

Most damage estimates in the current body of scientific literature focus on a specific fire or group of fires, the report states, and there is a paucity of data on the economic consequences of the increased wildfire risk from climate change.

Another complicating factor is the timber industry's ability to occasionally salvage logs after a wildfire, which can

9/17/2014 -- POLICY: Report argues that climate change-induced wildfires should factor into carbon's social cost -- Tuesday, September 16, 2014 -- www.eenews.net
Another complicating factor is the timber industry's ability to occasionally salvage logs after a wildfire, which can sometimes make up for the losses. The report also doesn't consider the potential for more home construction in the wildland-urban interface, a trend that has been frequently linked to rising fire suppression costs.

According wildland-urban interface expert Ray Rasker, executive director of the nonprofit Headwaters Economics, the report's conclusion that a wildfire's total cost can be 20 times the suppression cost is not far-fetched, especially in areas like Southern California where many high-value homes have been built in vulnerable areas.

"Just in home damages alone, it's feasible," Rasker said.

More analysis is needed to learn how much the social cost of carbon would increase if climate change-induced wildfire costs were added, Howard said.

But, Howard added, "it's not like the [social cost of carbon] is just missing wildfires -- it's actually missing quite a bit of predicted impacts."

These include food price spikes, more frequent inland flooding events and more severe storm surges due to sea-level rise, he said.

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AUTOMOBILES

Electric Vehicles Are Cleaner, but Still Not a Magic Bullet

By PAUL STENQUIST SEPT. 16, 2014

The Union of Concerned Scientists said on Tuesday that in 60 percent of the United States, electric vehicles are now responsible for fewer heat-trapping global warming emissions per mile than even the most efficient hybrids.

In an April 2012 report titled “State of Charge: Electric Vehicles’ Global Warming Emissions and Fuel Cost Savings Across the United States,” the group had concluded that electric vehicles were cleaner than hybrids in only 45 percent of the country. That was because in many areas, the majority of the electricity used to charge the vehicles was generated at coal-fired power plants.

Proponents of electric vehicles were not pleased. Automakers that had invested heavily in electric vehicle development were even less pleased. Just before the release of the 2012 report, the chief executive of Nissan and Renault, Carlos Ghosn, declared that electrics were cleaner than any car that burned gasoline, even in areas where all electric power is generated from coal.

The data said otherwise. The scientists group concluded that in an area where electric power was generated using a high proportion of coal — as it is in much of the nation’s midsection — an electric vehicle was no cleaner than a high-m.p.g. gasoline-engine subcompact.

In the two years since that report, some utilities have added clean

renewable sources of electricity to their mix and, more important, electric vehicles have become more efficient.

“Electric vehicles are doing more and more to fulfill their technological promise,” Don Anair, research and deputy director of the scientists group’s Clean Vehicles Program, said.

The Union of Concerned Scientists says that the average battery-powered electric vehicle sold over the past year uses 0.325 kilowatt-hour per mile, a 5 percent improvement over the 2011 data that was used to prepare the original report. That means an electric vehicle operating within the Midwest electric power grid, which blankets several states in whole or in part, is now as clean as a gasoline-engine car achieving 43 miles per gallon. In 2012, that number was said to be 39 m.p.g.

Some states that don’t depend heavily on coal for power generation fare much better. An electric vehicle in New York achieves the equivalent of 112 m.p.g., according to the scientist group’s data, while in California the number is 95 m.p.g. Others still lag behind. Colorado, which relies heavily on coal, is once again at the bottom of the list, with an E.V. achieving the same emissions as a 34 m.p.g. gasoline-engine car.

The group’s calculations are based on utility emissions data from a 2010 report from the Environmental Protection Agency, so the actual efficiency may be somewhat better because many utilities are adding renewable sources of electricity in order to comply with legislated mandates.

The updated report indicates that electric vehicles are not a cure-all that would eliminate overall fleet emissions. Still, said Mr. Anair, “If we want to reduce transportation pollution and oil use, a big part of the answer is to be like Bob Dylan and go electric.”